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CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY

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Board Approves Scope of Projects For Federal Stimulus Funds Elects Curt Pringle Chairman

Sacramento – With a new chairman at the gavel, the California High-Speed Rail Authority today approved its scope of projects that could qualify for federal stimulus funds. The package includes submissions for each of the proposed California high-speed rail system corridor segments, thereby encompassing the Authority's full system development plan.

The Board's action was required so that the State of California could meet a July 10 "pre-application" deadline imposed by the Federal Railroad Administration for a share of \$8 billion in stimulus funding for high-speed trains under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

Earlier in the meeting, the Board elected Anaheim Mayor Curt Pringle to be its chairman, replacing Judge Quentin L. Kopp who had served two terms as chairman. Former California Assemblymember Tom Umberg was elected vice-chairman.

While the Authority is considering the scope of a formal application for ARRA funding, which will be submitted by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in two parts coinciding with FRA deadlines in August and October, the pre-application submission identifies the scope of projects that would likely qualify for planning and engineering funds (Track 1 under FRA guidelines) and construction funding (Track 2):

TRACK 1 – The Authority is developing project submissions for completion of preliminary and project level environmental work in six corridors including: Los Angeles to San Diego // Los Angeles to Palmdale // Palmdale to Bakersfield // Merced to San Jose // Sacramento to Merced // Altamont.

TRACK 2 – Based on its adopted phasing plan and progress in the environmental and planning process, the Authority has identified Anaheim/Los Angeles, Bakersfield/Merced, and San Jose/San Francisco as three initial segments meeting FRA requirements for construction funding. Each of the three corridors is critical to the success of the project, demonstrates independent utility, and is completing project level environmental review.

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“High-speed trains are needed in California,” said Pringle. “The state must find a viable surface transportation alternative to ease auto and air traffic congestion between major urban centers and high population growth areas like the Central Valley.

“We have obtained environmental certification for the general statewide alignment and station locations for the 800-mile system designed to carry over 100 million people by year 2030, as well as secured California state bond proceeds resulting from passage of Proposition 1A. These are the kinds of things that position the state very competitively to secure matching federal funds through ARRA to begin construction on three key segments and to complete the preliminary engineering work on the linking segments,” said Pringle.

“Our task over the next several weeks and months is to reassess our project timelines based on FRA requirements and determine which specific projects we will put forward for ARRA funding,” said Pringle.

Pringle is the former Speaker of the State Assembly, where he represented part of Orange County for eight years during the 1990s. He was first elected Mayor of Anaheim in 2002 and is widely recognized for his expertise in economic development, land use planning, transportation and government finance reform. He also serves as a board member of the Orange County Transportation Authority.

“I have long believed in the value and benefit of a high speed rail system for our great state, and to be elected as chairman of the California High Speed Rail is an honor,” said Pringle. “We have a lot of work to do on the state and federal levels, but by working together great things can and will happen. This is an exciting time for high-speed rail and I look forward to future progress.”

Pringle actively serves as governing board member for the Ukleja Center for Ethical Leadership, California State University, Long Beach, as well on the boards of the Tiger Woods Learning Center Foundation and the John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes.

Tom Umberg is an attorney with the law firm of Manatt, specializing in federal and state policy and regulatory matters. He was selected as one of the “Best Lawyers in America” in the field of commercial litigation. In 1995, He was an Assistant U.S. Attorney in Los Angeles and Orange County. Umberg was appointed Deputy Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy in 1997. He served three terms in the California Legislature, most recently between 2004 and 2006. In the state Assembly, he chaired the Environmental Safety and the Elections and Redistricting Committees.

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